



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE REMAINS BELOW 3.0%

HELENA, Mont. --- Montana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.9% in December, which was essentially unchanged from the previous month's rate of 2.8%. This marks the second month in which the rate has been below 3.0%. Seasonally adjusted employment showed no change from November to December, while total job growth in 2006 equaled 17,600.

"Montana has experienced a year of escalating residential and commercial real estate activity, record high commodity prices, and strong growth in wages," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "This combination of robust economic activity helped to push unemployment rates to historically low levels."

Leisure and Hospitality saw the largest sector increase in December, growing by 400 positions. Other Services** and Financial Activities both added 200 jobs, while Information** increased by 100. Private Education and Health Services**, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Natural Resources and Mining all remained unchanged. Manufacturing and Professional and Business Services both saw a decline of 100 positions, while Construction fell by 500. Government posted the largest decrease of 600 jobs from November to December.

Additional information related to this employment situation press release can be found by visiting the Research and Analysis website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to Tyler Turner, Economist with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

***These industry sectors are not-seasonally adjusted.*

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

County unemployment rates are also available in our monthly economic bulletin, *Montana Economy at a Glance*, and on our website.

Labor Force data for Montana Indian Reservations is available on the Research and Analysis Bureau's website at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121

The January 2007 Labor Situation Report will be released Thursday March 8th, 2007.